

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2009

Mr. James Macrae
Associate Administrator for Primary Care
Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 17-99
Rockville, MD 20857-0002

Dear Mr. Macrae:

I write today in support of the Kagman Community Health Center's planning grant application. This grant would support the planning of a much-needed Community Health Center.

The Kagman community has little access to, but great need for, expanded health care. There are no healthcare providers in the Kagman area of Saipan, the largest island in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. For residents who do not own vehicles – a large number of Kagman residents - the closest medical facilities are an \$80 taxi ride away, as Saipan does not have public transportation. Meanwhile, the Kagman community requires the kind of health care provided by a Community Health Center: residents suffer from serious health problems including high rates of diabetes and heart disease, high rates of teen pregnancy, low birth rates, as well as frequent abuse of alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

This community's resources are scant, also enhancing the need for a Community Health Center. A door to door survey conducted by a local community group found that Kagman's population - overwhelmingly non-native English speaking – experience shockingly high unemployment; the group, Kagman Kommunitat Association, found 24% unemployment among 458 Kagman residents surveyed. Furthermore, Kagman residents often suffer from low education levels, lack of employment opportunities, and other factors heightening the need for a community health center.

I urge you to give strong consideration to the Kagman Community Health Center's application order to start an imperative process that will bring primary care services to those who are in dire need in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Again, thank you for writing. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office at (202)-225-2646 or visit our website at <http://www.sablan.house.gov>.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress

GS/nb